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ABSTRACT

This outline of a presentation describes a resource curriculum kit for involving youth in Special Olympics. The kit being described contains a fully scripted, four-lesson curriculum unit for grade levels K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The themes of the four lessons are awareness (e.g., avoiding stereotypes and increasing knowledge); understanding (e.g., what it is like to have a cognitive disability); inspiration (e.g., why Special Olympics athletes succeed at what they do); and action (e.g., making connections in the school and community with Special Olympics). The kit offers tools for involving children and youth with and without mental retardation in Special Olympics. The curriculum helps schools and teachers meet a variety of requirements and needs such as academic achievement standards, understanding and acceptance of individual differences, and youth development and character education. It involves service learning projects in the school and community, and it promotes and supports physical activity, physical fitness, and sports participation. At the elementary and middle school levels, lessons fit into the activities of social studies, language arts, history, and other core curriculum programs. At the high school level, lessons fit into activities of the physical education program. (SM)

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Special Olympics Get Into It

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*A **free** resource curriculum kit to involve youth in Special Olympics*

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Council for Exceptional Children

AMERICAN SCHOOL COUNSELOR ASSOCIATION

NASPE
National Association for Sport and Physical Education

Special Olympics
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NEESP

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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SO Get Into It

- ***SO Get Into It*** is a fully scripted four-lesson curriculum unit for four grade levels:
  - Elementary (grades K-2)
  - Elementary (grades 3-5)
  - Middle (grades 6-8)
  - High school (grades 9-12)

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THEMES OF THE FOUR LESSONS

- ☆ AWARENESS
- ☆ UNDERSTANDING
- ☆ INSPIRATION
- ☆ ACTION

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Note:

The term "**mental retardation**" is currently used by Special Olympics. Teachers may adapt this terminology to meet local requirements.

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Program Goals

SO Get Into It provides:

1. Tools for involving children and youth with and without mental retardation in Special Olympics.
2. Curriculum designed to help schools and teachers meet a variety of requirements and needs.

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These include:

- Academic achievement standards
- Understanding and acceptance of individual differences
- Youth development and character education

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- Service-learning projects in the school and community
- Promoting and supporting physical activity, physical fitness, and participation in sports
- Meets the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

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Field Testing and Availability

- Middle school lessons field tested in eight States & Canada involving 320 children during the Fall 2000
- Middle school curriculum kit, including support materials, reproducible masters, and videos, rolled out in September 2001
- Elementary and high school field testing to 13 schools in 10 states with a total of 545 students
- Elementary and high school curriculum kits will be available May 2002

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A Focus on academics at the elementary & middle school level

Lessons fit into the activities of social studies, language arts, history, etc. programs

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A Focus on Physical Education at the High School Level

Lessons fit into the activities of the high school physical education program

- Lessons support all NASPE physical education standards, in particular:
  - #5 - Responsible personal and social behavior
  - #6 - Understanding and respect for difference among people
  - #7 - Physical activity is an opportunity for social interaction

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LESSON 1: AWARENESS:
Down With Stereotypes

Who are people with mental retardation, and how does Special Olympics help them?

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LESSON 1: AWARENESS

- What do you know about mental retardation, special needs, stereotypes, disabilities, Special Olympics?
- Special Olympics info.
- Introduce service-learning projects.

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LESSON 2: UNDERSTANDING:

The Loretta Claiborne Story

What is it like to have a cognitive disability?

- Learn from the athletes about how it feels to be treated unfairly or disrespectfully
- To identify ways people can overcome adversity and discrimination

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LESSON 2: UNDERSTANDING

Supplemental videos…

- *The Oprah Winfrey Show*
- *The Loretta Claiborne Story,* ABC/Disney
- *Nick News: A World of Difference* – 2001 Global Youth Summit, Anchorage, AK
- *Life in the Shadows* – J.P. Kennedy Foundation
- *Attitude* – 1999 Special Olympics World Games

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LESSON 3: INSPIRATION:
Going for the Goal

Why do Special Olympic athletes succeed at what they do?

- Setting and reaching a goal, to set and accomplish goals for themselves, and to become involved in programs or activities, such as Special Olympics, that help others achieve their goals

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LESSON 3: INSPIRATION

- See first-hand and read about real-life Special Olympics athletes who are an inspiration to us all
- Opportunity to meet Global Messengers

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LESSON 4: ACTION:

Making Connections in the School and Community with Special Olympics

What can be done as an individual or class to support Special Olympic athletes in our school or community?

- **Service-Learning**
- **Community service activities**

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LESSON 4: ACTION

Activities may be different levels ranging from relatively simple and short-term to more complex and longer-term.

Examples:

- Interview and write about a student with special needs.
- Develop a training program for an a Special Olympics athlete.
- Start a Unified Sports program at your school.
- Attend and volunteer at a Special Olympics event.
- Organize or participate in a Partners Club Program.
- Organize & host a Special Olympics event at your school.

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LESSON 4: ACTION

Student handout / project planning sheet:

- **Goal**
- **Steps to achieve goal**
- **Resources needed**
- **Know how you achieved the goal**
- **Reflection /evaluation**

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